



# Cooperatives as a Practice of Community Leadership

Thursday, August 25, 2022

*2022 NOW Webinar Series*

*Levers of Change in Action: Unpacking the NOW Playbook*



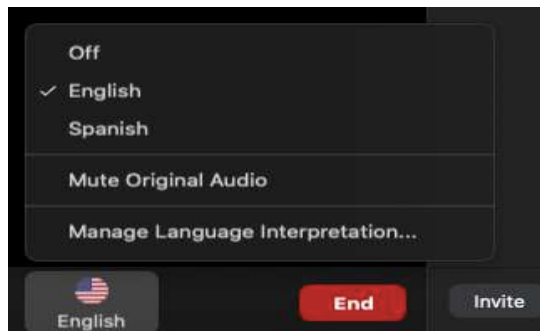


# Session Outline

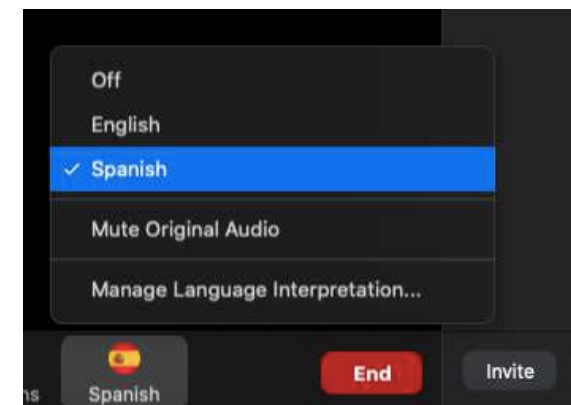
- Welcome & Overview
- About Vital Village
- *Cooperatives as a Practice of Community Leadership*
  - *Stephanie Waters*
  - *Darnell Adams*
- Panel Discussion and Audience Q&A
- Closing

# Language Justice: Zoom Webinar Interpretación/ Interpretation

1. In your meeting/webinar controls, click Interpretation. 
2. Click the language that you would like to hear.
3. (Optional) To only hear the interpreted language, click Mute Original Audio.



1. En los controles de la reunión o el seminario web, hacer clic en Interpretación.
2. Hacer clic en el idioma que desee escuchar.
3. (Opcional) Para escuchar solo el idioma interpretado, haga clic en Silenciar audio original.

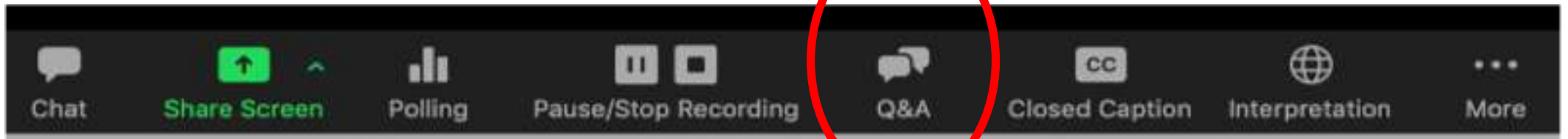


# Housekeeping

- Spanish Language Access
  - Community Language Cooperative (CLC) based in Denver, CO
- Slides and recording will be posted on the NOW Forum (<https://www.networksofopportunity.org/Webinar>)
- Submit questions on dashboard
- Use the chat box for comments

# Q&A

- Submit your questions by clicking on the Q&A icon at the bottom of your screen



# About Vital Village Networks

**Vital Village Networks** is a national collective of diverse change-makers and organizations committed to pioneering sustainable approaches to transforming child, family, and community wellbeing

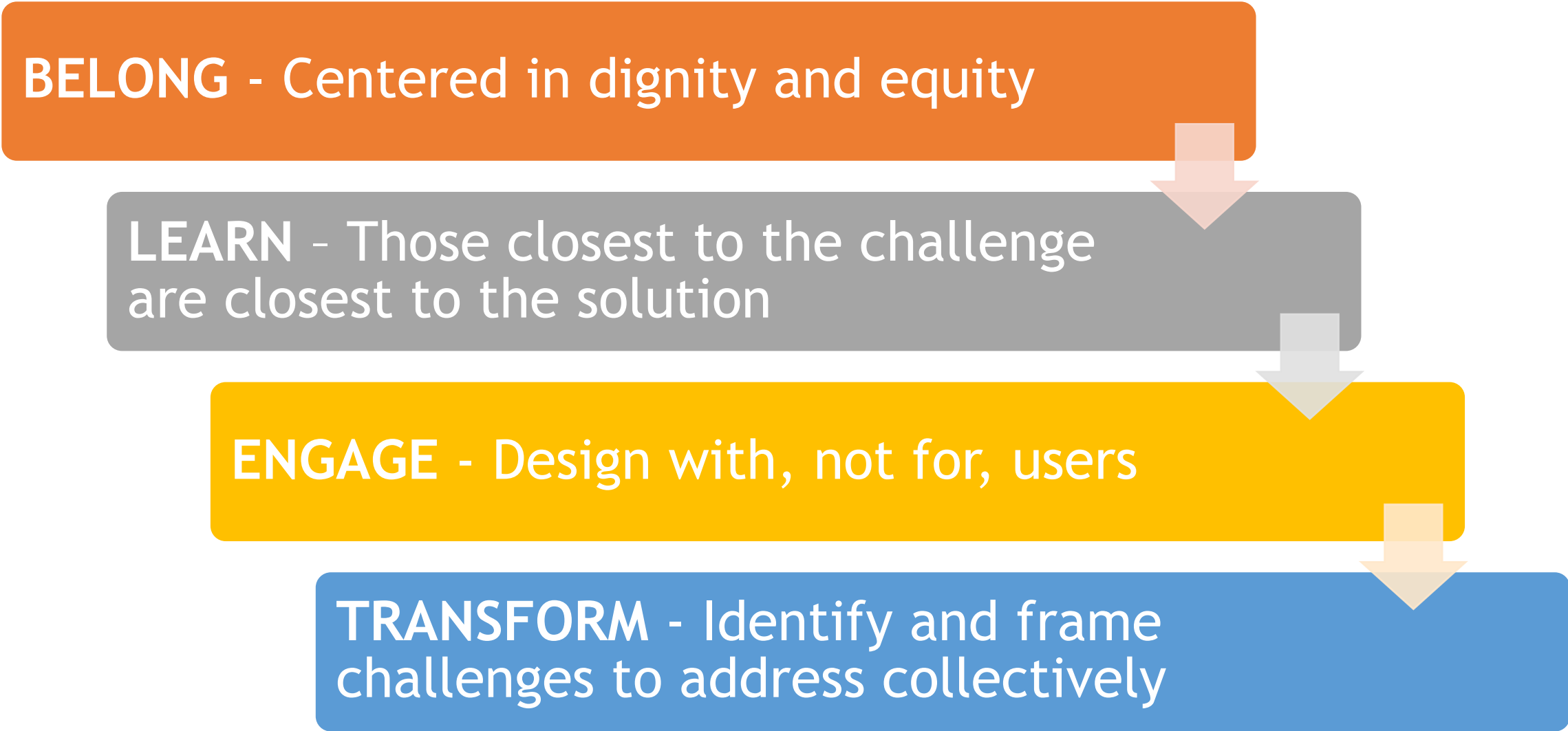
**Networks of Opportunity for Child Wellbeing (NOW)** is a national initiative powered by Vital Village Networks

NOW exists to achieve social transformation and racial justice by partnering with individuals, organizations, institutions, and coalitions across the country to build their capacity to equitably share power with communities that have faced ongoing racial oppression and marginalization.



# Guiding Principles

**BELONG** - Centered in dignity and equity



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graph TD; A[BELONG - Centered in dignity and equity] --> B[LEARN - Those closest to the challenge are closest to the solution]; B --> C[ENGAGE - Design with, not for, users]; C --> D[TRANSFORM - Identify and frame challenges to address collectively];
```

**LEARN** - Those closest to the challenge  
are closest to the solution

**ENGAGE** - Design with, not for, users

**TRANSFORM** - Identify and frame  
challenges to address collectively

# NOW Innovation Forum - Sign up to engage with a network of community leaders



<https://www.networksofopportunity.org/>

# NOW Playbook: Transformative Community Capacity to Advance Equity



<https://www.networksofopportunity.org/now-playbook>

# Levers of Community Change

## Levers of Community Change

Community and systems transformation start from the ground up. The strengths, assets, and wisdom of those most impacted by structural inequities are the cornerstones of sustainable solutions that ultimately create healthy, thriving communities of opportunity for all children.

As community networks, grassroots coalitions, and parent-led campaigns mobilize to address inequities in early care and education—and to expand access to health care, resources, and opportunities to achieve educational and economic wellbeing—wisdom from both research and practice are revealing important common threads that help facilitate successful and impactful initiatives.

### Levers of Community Change

In 2016, NOW convened a diverse, cross-sector group including parents, caregivers, educators, educators, practitioners, and other stakeholders, with an ambitious goal to co-design a robust community capacity-building infrastructure to support community efforts to advance equity and achieve optimal child and family wellbeing by transforming and aligning systems of care and education in early childhood, using a trauma-informed and equity-focused lens.

Drawing upon the lessons learned from Utah's High Networks' history of community engagement and

empowerment in Boston, this strategic planning process yielded a theory of action that established the foundation for the NOW initiative and its framework for building local community capacity. **Five key levers of community change** emerged from the NOW theory of action as critical domains of action and collaboration that can drive equitable and inclusive systems alignment and transformation—moving those most impacted by inequity from the margins to the center. These levers of community change foster equitable leadership through strategies that uplift and honor dignity.

### FIVE KEY LEVERS OF COMMUNITY CHANGE



## FIVE KEY LEVERS OF COMMUNITY CHANGE

**Lever 2**  
Implement Shared  
Governance

**Lever 4**  
Tell Data  
Stories

**Lever 1**  
Center Racial  
Equity and  
Healing

**Lever 3**  
Engage  
Communities  
Authentically and  
with Dignity

**Lever 5**  
Plan for  
Sustainability

# Stories, Strategies, and Tools

## Lever 1: Center Racial Equity and Healing

### Stories in Action: Centering Racial Equity and Healing

**Voices and Choices for Children Coalition** (Twin Cities, Minnesota). This coalition explicitly names racial equity in its mission statement: “to build capacity and amplify the voices of communities of color and American Indian communities to ensure they have an impact on public policy and practice and remove systemic barriers in order to create the conditions in which racial and social justice thrive.” The coalition works collaboratively to develop strongly engaged cultural communities of learning, organizing, and advocacy for their input and impact in shaping more equitable practices and policies that will support better outcomes, specifically for children of color and American Indian children, prenatal to 8 years old across the state.

**Berkeley Early Care and Education (BEE) Collective** (Berkeley County, South Carolina). BEE Collective was developed to address discriminatory exclusion and expulsion rates in early learning settings, disproportionately affecting Black boys, in their community and across the state. The Collective focuses on the impact of implicit racial bias in the early education system and works with community leaders to develop solutions. They use community and public data to draw attention to this equity issue and have developed a multi-pronged approach to address it at the community and state level. Locally, they offer mental health, inclusion, and curriculum support to centers serving students of color who are disproportionately impacted by expulsion. They also engage in state-level advocacy to better support parents and teachers and invest in training to reduce implicit racial bias in the maternal health and education system and to build capacity for equitable treatment of children and families.

**Essex County Council for Young Children (ECCYC Network)** (New Jersey).

The ECCYC health committee focuses on building early education and is that are responsive to adverse experiences and trauma. Using a collaborative approach,



Network is formed as a wide range of stakeholders, including education, care, and business, all align around this collective

## Lever 1: Center Racial Equity and Healing

### Village Strategies

**Name racism as a root cause of health, economic, and social inequities.** Understanding and recognizing the levels of racism (internal, interpersonal, and institutional) and learning about the historical forces that have driven its current form is crucial to identify strategies to dismantle it. Dr. Camara Phyllis Jones’s “A Gardener’s Tale” provides a framework for understanding and recognizing various levels of racism and its impact on health and wellbeing.[2] A first step to addressing structural racism is to acknowledge that it exists, and that, as a system, it perpetuates and reinforces other levels of racism.



**Commit to eliminate racism and achieve as a central — not an add-on — of your work.** Nothing is an important step, but it doesn’t stop there. Dismantling racism should be a central goal in all early childhood or health, and education system alignment efforts, and/or separate side efforts. Reflection, evaluation, and implementation, doing it right, and practice steps to identify and focus your effort on anti-racist organizational p

## Lever 1: Center Racial Equity and Healing

### Tools

**Racial Equity Action Plans: A How-to Manual (Government Alliance on Race and Equity).** Racial equity action plans can put a theory of change into action to drive institutional and structural change and achieve a collective vision of racial equity. This manual provides guidance for local governments to develop their own racial equity action plans after a period of research and information gathering, including advice and tools for conducting this research.

**A Practitioner’s Guide for Advancing Health Equity (Center for Disease Control and Prevention).** This comprehensive tool provides lessons learned and persuasive ideas on how to maximize the effects of policy, systems, and environmental improvement strategies — all with the goal of reducing health disparities and advancing health equity.

**The Working Principles for Health Justice & Racial Equity Organizational Self-Assessment (The Provis Project).** This tool supports organizations or programs to reflect on the ways in which they embody health justice and racial equity in practice, and identify opportunities for growth and improvement. Included are five working principles, and what each principle encompasses.

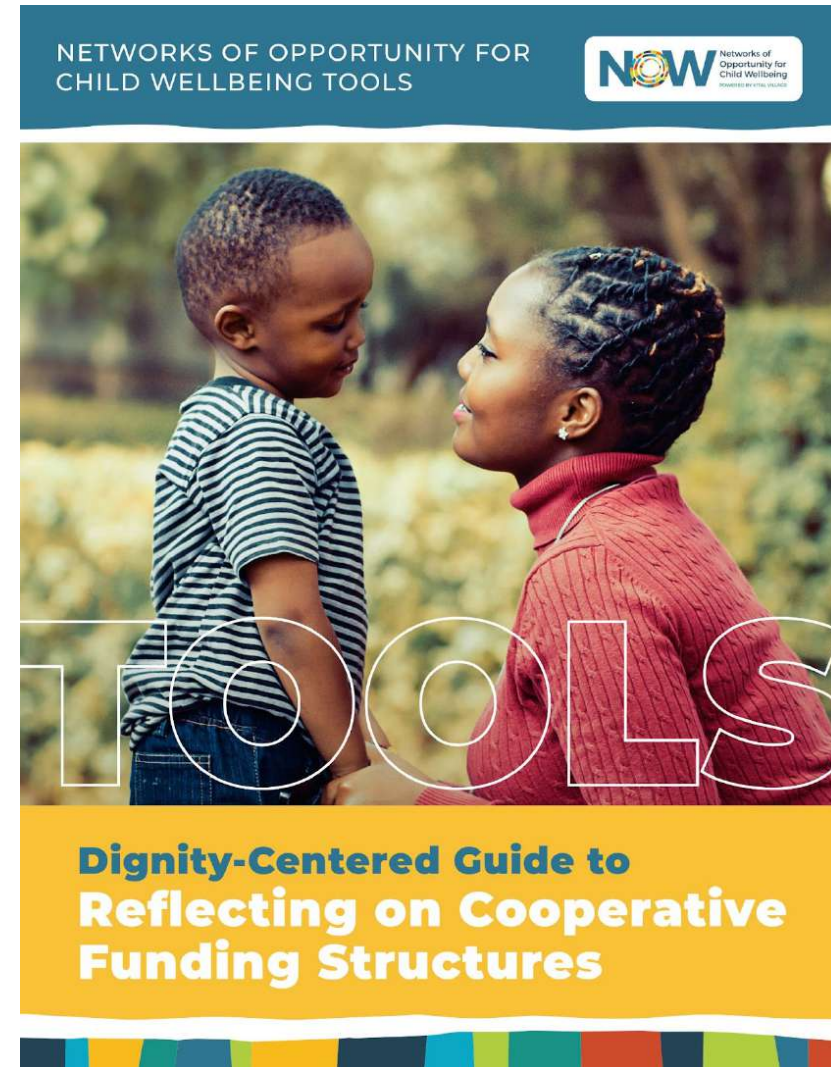
**Early Childhood System Performance Assessment Toolkit: Advancing Parent Engagement & Equity Items (Center for the Study of Social Policy/ CSPP).** This set of tools helps groups measure various aspects of how well your local early childhood system is working, including key equity metrics.

### Resources

**Manifesto for Race Equity & Parent Leadership in Early Childhood Systems (Center for the Study of Social Policy).** A group of 40 parent leaders and agency staff from nine Early Childhood Learning and Innovation Networks for Communities (EC-LINC) communities, with support from CSPP staff and consultants, came together to create this Manifesto for Race Equity and Parent Leadership in Early Childhood.

**Equity Manifesto (PolicyLink).** The Equity Manifesto has been inspired by the work, commitments, insights, and resolve of the many partners with whom PolicyLink has shared the journey of advancing racial and economic equity.

# *A Dignity-Centered Guide to Reflecting on Cooperative Funding Structures*



<https://www.networksofopportunity.org/coop-reflection-guide>

# Guiding Principles and Practices

## CORE PRINCIPLES



## CORE PRACTICES



## Dignity-Centered Funding Partnership Guide

This tool provides a guided series of questions that allow funders, investors, and potential partners to determine their intentions and practices with respect to investing in, funding, or supporting equitable and sustainable community leadership.

At the heart of the tool is the opportunity to reflect on the true intentions related to the investment, centered on the following questions:

- *Is an equitable partnership desired?*
- *Is community leadership a desired outcome?*

### WHY USE THE DIGNITY-CENTERED GUIDE TO REFLECTING FUNDING STRUCTURES?

The goal of the tool is simple: to reflect on intentions before making decisions around dispersing funding, and to yield more authentic relationships. Specifically, the tool is designed to help funders unpack and understand their responses to the following series of questions:



### A. Central Questions

1. Is investing in community leadership a desired goal?
2. Is there a desire for a collaborative partnership or is the goal charitable giving?
3. Is community self-determination a desired goal?
4. How might we expand the authenticity of community engagement to better understand and support self-determination?

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# Featured Speakers



**Stephanie Waters**

*Young Child Wellness Council / Black  
Warrior Community Action Team*



**Darnell Adams**

*Firebrand Cooperative*



**Stephanie Waters**

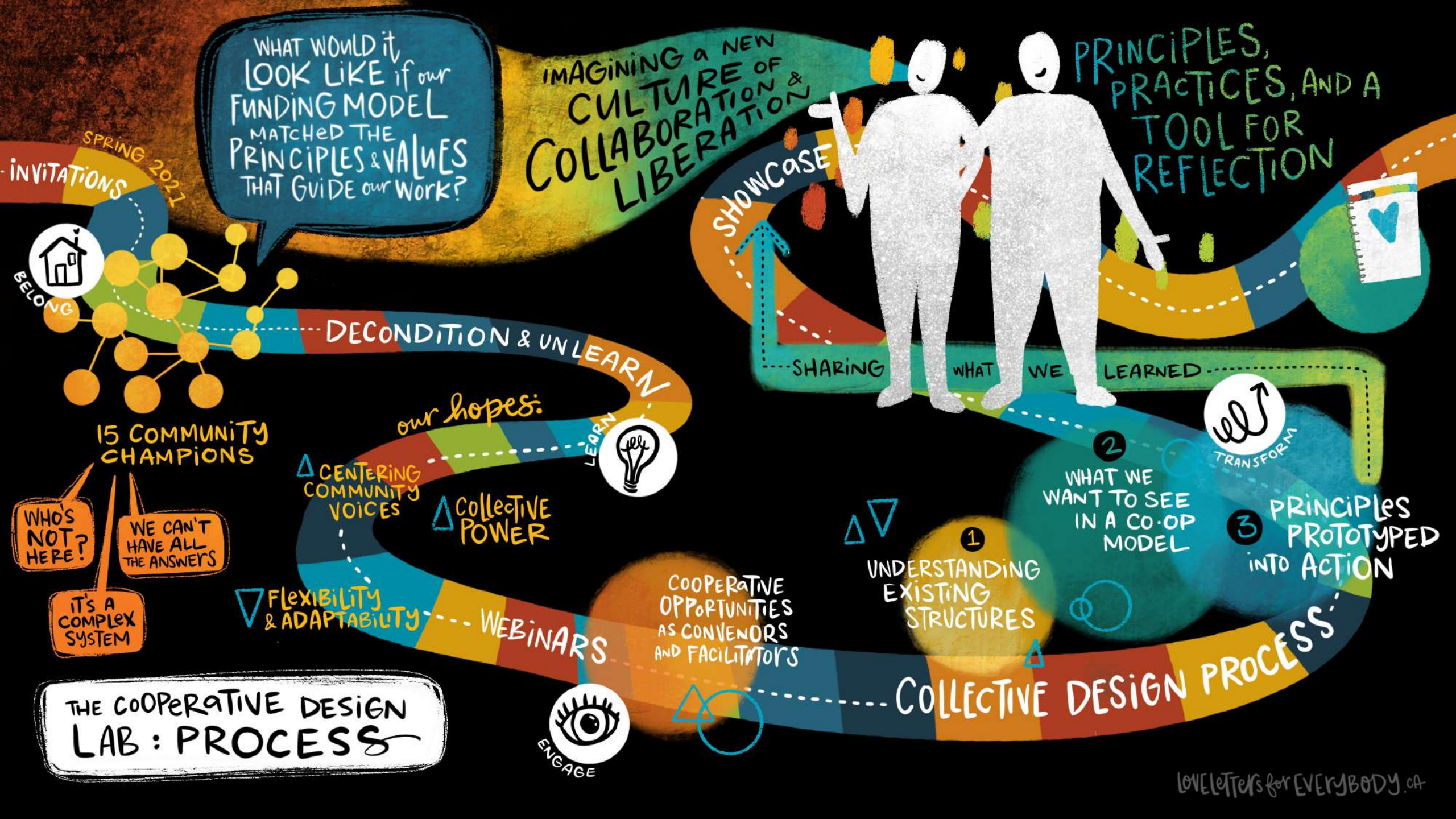
*Young Child Wellness Council /  
Black Warrior Community Action  
Team*

# Exploring Cooperative Funding Structures

NETWORKS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR  
CHILD WELLBEING TOOLS



**Dignity-Centered Guide to  
Reflecting on Cooperative  
Funding Structures**



the  
LAB

WORKING  
TOWARDS  
SHARED  
POWER!

EXPLORING CO-OPERATIVES AS:

COMMUNITY-LED  
DECISIONS

NURTURER OF  
RELATIONSHIPS

BUILDERS OF  
CAPACITY

FUNDERS

EXAMINING  
VALUE  
PROPOSITIONS:

WHAT WE'D LOVE  
TO SEE IN A  
CO-OP FUNDING  
MODEL.

EQUITY,  
COLLABORATION,  
INCLUSIVITY,  
RECIPROCITY

UNDERSTANDING  
EXISTING  
STRUCTURES

PROTOTYPING  
into ACTION

THE COLLECTIVE DESIGN PROCESS

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES

TOWARDS PARTNERSHIP & SHARED POWER

RELATIONSHIPS

*slowing down: the relationship is the goal itself, not a product*

IMPROVEMENT

*an iterative process: asking "how are we growing?"*

SERVICE

*listening deeply to community needs*

ACKNOWLEDGE HISTORY

*including culture and community context in processes & outcomes*

DIGNITY-CENTRED GUIDE TO REFLECTING ON CO-OPERATIVE FUNDING STRUCTURES.

INFORMS

SELF-DETERMINATION

DIGNITY

SUSTAINABILITY

EQUITY



# DIGNITY-CENTRED GUIDE to REFLECTING ON COOPERATIVE FUNDING STRUCTURES

a living document

A WAY TO  
REFLECT ON  
FUNDING  
STRUCTURES...

TO BE USED  
AS A TOOL by:

EQUITABLE  
PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNITY  
LEADERSHIP

AND TO  
LEARN  
TOGETHER:

What does it  
mean to  
Partner?

What Happens  
When Trust  
is Prioritized?

How does this project  
ADVANCE SOVEREIGNTY &  
Self-DETERMINATION?

RECIPROCITY AND SOLIDARITY.

AND ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT:

TRANSFORMING THE FUNDING ECOSYSTEM, BUILDING  
CAPACITY, & NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS.



**Darnell Adams**

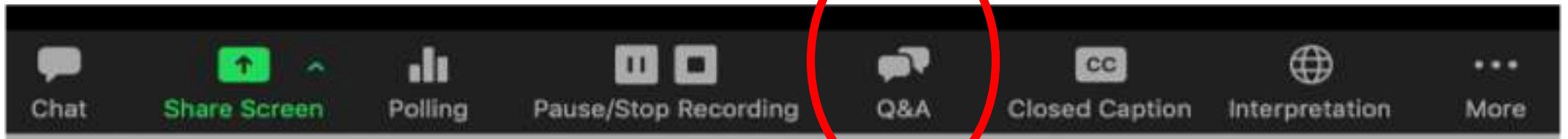
*Firebrand Cooperative*

# Q & A

Question and  
Answer

# Q&A

- Submit your questions by clicking on the Q&A icon at the bottom of your screen



# Reflective Action Guide



## NOW 2022 Webinar Series

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please download this document and take a few minutes to write some initial responses to the following questions

|                                                                                                                                            |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| What resonated with you most from today's webinar?                                                                                         |  |
| Which lever of change are you feeling compelled to focus attention on in your work?                                                        |  |
| How are you thinking about children, families, and communities in your work differently?                                                   |  |
| What 2-3 action steps might you take over the next two months to better uplift and honor the dignity of children, families, and community? |  |

*Registration Now Open!*

**2022 National Community  
Leadership Summit  
October 18-19, 2022**



<https://www.vitalvillagesummit.org>



# Thank You!

<https://www.networksofopportunity.org/>

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Follow us on Twitter:

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@Vital\_Village



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